

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives, today, voted on H.R. 6304, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 1978 Amendments Act of 2008.

Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D-VA-03), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, opposed the legislation, which passed 293 – 129 ( [Roll No. 437](#) ).

Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“Madam Speaker, I oppose H.R. 6304. It allows widespread acquisition of private conversations without meaningful court review. The bill actually permits the government to perform mass, untargeted surveillance of any and all conversations believed to be coming into and going out of the United States without any individualized finding that wrongdoing is believed to be involved.

“This power is not limited to terrorism. It could be any foreign intelligence, which would include anything related to diplomacy. Furthermore, the bill is vague on what can be done with the information after it is acquired and who has access to it.

The only court review is a check on whether or not the government certifies that the appropriate process has been followed.

The court does not review who, what, where and how the tapping will occur.

“Furthermore, the collection of all of this data can be done under emergency provisions before the court has any opportunity to act and the collection can continue to be done even if the court later rejects the application, if the administration appeals.

“The bill also provides retroactive immunity to communications companies who may have violated people’s rights; whether or not those rights have been violated should be reviewed by the courts, not decided here in Congress.

“Madam Speaker, we can protect America’s national security and protect individual civil rights by providing government access to personal conversation, with meaningful court review. This bill fails to do that, and therefore it should be defeated.”

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